

THE 6*
Discipline and Habit
OF
VIRGINS.

Written in Latin by the
HOLY MARTYR

St. Cyprian,

Arch-Bishop of *CARTHAGE*.

Translated into English.

L O N D O N :

Printed in the Year 1697.



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T H E
P R E F A C E.

VAin Pomp and Luxury has so far prevailed with those that wou'd be called the fair Sex, that, it seems, it were ill manners to question the lawfulness thereof. An universal corruption and dissolution of manners, in many of them, is come to that pitch, that they seem, almost, past reclaiming. Lewdness and Debaucherie is so ordinary a sport amongst many, not only of the inferior sort of women; but also among some (if I may not say many) of the first rank and quality; that Chri-
a. 2. stian

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stian modesty, so especially recommended to the femal Sex, is not only forgotten, but even contemned and trodden under foot. St. Paul not only exhorts, but also seems to command women to adorn them-

1. *Tim. c. selves in modest Apparel with shamefacedness and sobriety; not*

with broidered hair or gold or pearls or costly array; but (which becometh women professing Godliness with good works. And

St. Peter to the same effect. Whose adorning (says he) let

1. *Pet. c. 3. it not be that outward of plaiting the hair and of wearing of*

gold, or of putting on of apparel, but let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet Spirit, which is, in the sight of God, of great price.

And

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*And yet no Age of Paganism
cou'd ever paralel the Pomp and
Luxury of women pretending to pro-
fess Christianity; whilst, so many
thousands of the living members of
Jesus Christ, I mean the poor, are
exposed to the injury of hunger and
cold, with, scarce, so many rags as
will cover their nakedness, and can
hardly extort, with a great deal of
importunity, one single farthing, from
some of those Ladies, who have, God
knows, how many pounds worth of
Ribands, of Patches, of Gold and
Silver Lace, and other superfluous
Vanities to deck their heads and
heels.*

*It was this dolefull consideration,
and a Zeal of those precious Souls
captivated by the Devil, that moved
me to translate this small Treatise
of the Holy Martyr St. Cyprian;
in hopes that some of those Ladies,
a 3 who*

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who will not scruple to cast away four or five hours a day upon a Comedy wou'd bestow, at least, an hour or two on the reading of this, to see how different a sense this great man had of the Pomp and Luxury, so common now a days, from some mercenary Pastors, and blind pretended Spiritual Guides, who criminally betray the word of God, with false glosses and interpretations, wherewith they not only countenance, but also seem to abet these corruptions: as if such plain text of the Scripture needed any other comment, than the bare reading. Not that I dare hope to be able to reclaim many (for alas! such is the corruption of our Age, that few will give themselves the time to read it, much less, take it to heart) but that, since we are accustomed to pay a great deal of veneration to antiquity, and that the words of men eminent for piety and learning

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learning, especially such as flourished in the primitive Church and purest times of Christianity, are of great weight; some vertuous Ladies and Gentlewoman, considering seriously in what abomination this holy and learned Martyr held this Pagan Pomp, so much improved, in our days, by Christian women, who, notwithstanding, solemnly renounced it in their Baptism, wou'd reform their Childrens Manners after this original; which may be easily done, by moderating the excess of their dressees, by retrenching the extravagance of their pleasures, and diversions, especially that of the Theatre, where Modesty and shamefacedness is easily shipwrecked, and immodesty and barefaced impudence soon learned; but more particularly, by imploying some part of that time which is thrown away upon diversion, in practising some works of Piety and Devotion. And since I come to talk of the Theatre;

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Theatre; I hope the devout Reader won't be sorry I make this digression, to give him St. John Chrysostome that learned and vertuous Bishop of Constantinople, his sence of it. This great Man having lived a great while in two Imperial Cities, viz. Antioch and Constantinople, had often occasion to Preach against the disorders of the Theatre. The Comedy, says he, is the School of Debauchery, the Accademy of incontinence, the chair of pestilence. There you shall see lewd Women representing Adulteries and pronouncing Blasphemies. When you come from the Theatre, with what face can you look upon your Wife, your Children, your Servants, your Friends? And again he confutes the silly pretences and foolish causes of those that goes there. These are his Words, What harm is it, say you, to go to the Comedy?
does

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does that deserve a separation from the Communion? (*for it seems he used to Excommunicate such as went.*) And I ask you, can there be a greater crime than to come impudently to the Holy Table, after being polluted with Adultery? Yes it's a kind of Adultery to go to the Comedy; and if you do not believe me, give ear to the Words of him who is to Judge our lives. *Jesus* Christ says unto us, that whosoever looketh on a Woman to lust after her, hath committed Adultery with her already in his Heart: What may be said then of those who go on purpose to these places, where they spend the day in looking upon Women who have not the best Reputation in the World? With what Face will they maintain that they have not looked upon them with Lustful Eyes? Since there is nothing to be

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be heard, but lascivious words ; nothing to be seen, but immodest actions : There you shall hear amorous Songs, there you are charmed with consorts of Musick, proper to excite the most shameful Passions ; there you shall see Women trim'd with false features and colours, decked and arrayed for to inspire Love. There the audience is in a confusion, and a certain sloath, which pushes them forward to the Lewdness, which this fatal train inspires them with. The Musical Instruments, the consorts and the Airs, are not less dangerous ; *they do unhappily* flatter and soften the Heart, and prepare it to run into the Net which is spread by these unfortunate and depraved Women. For, if in the Church where Psalms are Sung, where the Scripture is expounded, where we have continually the fear of God before

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before our Eyes, and stand with an awful respect: if, I say, even in this venerable place, Lust creeps in, how shall those, who are daily at the Play, who neither sees nor hears but what is prophane and dangerous, who are filled with unclean thoughts, whose Eyes and Ears are continually attacked, be able to resist the motions of Lust? or if that be impossible, how will they excuse themselves from the crime of Adultery? And if they are Adulterers how can they pretend to enter into the Church and partake of the Sacred Table, unless they Repent. *Thus far St. Chrysostome.*

As for the Author of this Treatise I need not say any more of him, his Learned and Pious works sufficiently declare his Character to the World. This only I will say, that what

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what he writ or Preached, the same
he confirmed by his works in his Life,
and at his death sealed it with his
Blood. Touching the translation, which
is my own Part, I am not ashamed
to own that it lost a great deal of
it's Lustre and Beauty in the change.
However, if it please Almighty God
to give it his Blessing, I hope it will
be of some profit to the Reader, if so
I have my end.

The

The Book of the Holy Martyr
St. CYPRIAN Arch-Bishop
of *Carthage*; of the Dicipline
and Habit of Virgins.

Disciplin the guardian of Hope,
the keeper of Faith, the
Guide in the way of Salva-
tion, the Fewel and Nutri-
ment of a good Inclination, the Mistress
of Virtue, causeth one to abide constant-
ly in Christ, to live in God, and to arive
happily at the Heavenly promises, and
Divine rewards. To follow this is Sal-
vation; but to contemn and neglect it,
is Mortal. The Holy Ghost speaks in
the Psalms, *Hold fast the Disci-
pline lest perhaps the Lord should* Psal. 2.
be angry, and ye perish from the
right way, when his anger will be suddenly
kindled against you. And again,
God saith to the Sinner, *why dost* Psal. 49.
thou declare my Righteousness

A

and

and takest my Covenant by thy Mouth?
 Since thou hatest Discipline, and rejectest
 my words. And again we read,

Sap. 3. *He that casts off Discipline, is
 unhappy.* And from Solomon

we receive the Commands of Wisdom
 advising, *My Son do not neglect the Di-*
scipline of the Lord, neither be

Prov. 3. *wearied of his correction, for whom
 the Lord loveth, he correcteth.*

If then God loves whom he corrects, and
 corrects him that he may mend; the
 Brethren Likewise, especially the Priests
 do not hate but love those whom they
 correct, to the end they may amend;
 since God, by his Prophet *Jeremias*, has
 foretold it, and our days have declared
 it. *I will give you Pastors ac-*

Ier. 3. *cording to mine heart, which shall
 feed you with Chastening.* Seeing

then, that in the Holy Scriptures both
 old and new; Discipline is always com-
 manded; and that the Foundation of
 Religion and Faith proceeds from fear
 and observance; what should we more
 earnestly desire? what more willingly
 embrace? That, having taken a deep root
 and

and solidly fixed our habitation upon that firm rock, we may stand unshaken against the Storms and Tempests of this World; that by those divine precepts we may attain to the gifts of Christ: considering likewise and understanding, that our Members being the Temples of God, purified and cleansed from all the dregs of the old Contagion, by the sanctification of the Sacred ablution, it is not lawfull either to Defile, or Polute them, seeing, he that defiles shall be defiled. We are the Tillers and Rulers of those Temples, let us therefore serve him, to whom we belong. *St. Paul says, you do not belong to your selves, for ye are bought at a great Price, Glorifie and carry God in your Bodys*; let us glory, and carry God in a pure and unspotted body; and we who are redeemed by the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, let us obey with all submission the Commands, of our Redeemer, and let us endeavor, that no impure nor Prophane thing be brought into the Temple of God, lest he being offended, shou'd forsake the seat where he dwels. These are the Words of the

Lord both saving and teaching, healing and admonishing; *Behold thou art made whole, Sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee.* He prescribes him the Manner of living he gives him the Law of Innocence after he had given him Health. Neither does he suffer him to give the reins to his Passions, but threatens him with more grievous evils than those whereof he was cured: because it is a lesser offence to have Sinned before he had known the Discipline of the Lord, which once known is almost unpardonable if Infringed. Let Men and Women, Boys and Maids, let every Sex and age look to this, and see that, for the Religion and Faith which they ow to Almighty God, that pure and Holy thing which they have received from his bounty, be not slightly look'd after, since it is written: *He that*
Mat. 10. Perseverers unto the end shall be saved.

Now my discourse is unto you O Virgins, of whom I have so much the greater care, by how much your Glory is the more sublime. (Virginity) is that Flower

Flower of the Ecclesiastical Blossom, the glory and Ornament of Spiritual grace, a sweet Inclination, an intire and sollid work, the Master-piece of praise and honor, the Image of God, answering to the Lords Holyness, the most Illustrious portion of the flock of Christ. The glorious fecundity of our Mother the Church, by these and in these doth abundantly Flourish: And by how much this spreading Virginitie adds to its Number, so much it increases the Joy of its Mother. To these we speak, these we exhort by Love rather than by power: not that, as being highest and lowest, but Conscious of our own meanness, we do assume any Liberty of Censuring; but rather out of our tenderness for them, we much more fear the assaults of the Devil. Neither is this a needless caution, or an empty fear, which takes care of the way of Salvation, which preserves the wholesome precepts of the Lord, that those, who Consecrated themselves to Christ; and by renouncing Carnal Concupiscence, have intirely devoted their Souls and Bodys to God, should finish that

work which is destined to a great Reward ; nor be Sollicitous to adorn, or please any, but their own Lord, from whom they expect the Reward of their Virginity, since he himself says : *All cannot receive this saying, save they to whom*

it is given. For there are some

Mat. 19 *Eunuchs, which were so born from their Mothers womb, and there are some, who were made Eunuchs of Men ; and there be some Eunuchs which have made themselves Eunuchs for the Kingdom of Heaven. So likewise, by this voice of the Angel, the gift of Continence is declared, Virginity is Preach-*

ed : These are they which were

Apo. 14. *not defiled with Women, for they are Virgins, these are they*

which follow the Lamb whither soever he goeth. Neither doth God promise the

grace of Continence to Men only, and forget the Women, but because the wo-

man is a portion of the man, and was taken from him and formed, God speak-

eth, commonly in all the Scriptures, to him that was first formed, because they

are both in one flesh, and by the Man is

signi

signified likewise the Woman. But if
 Continnence doth follow Christ, and
 Virginitie be designed for the Kingdom
 of God, what have they (Virgins) to
 do with Worldly deckings and Orna-
 ments, with which whilst they covet to
 please men, they offend God, not re-
 flecting that it is written *they*
~~*who please men are Confounded,*~~ Psa. 51.
for God maketh no account of
~~*them.*~~ and that St. Paul hath likewise
 after a glorious and Sublime manner
 preached. *If I yet pleased men,*
~~*I shoud not be the Servant of*~~ Gal. 1.
~~*Christ.*~~ Now continency and
 Chastity does not consist in the integri-
 ty of the Flesh alone, but also in the Mo-
 desty and Simplicity of the Exterior or-
 naments, that according to St. Paul, *the*
~~*Woman that is not Married,*~~ may be Ho-
~~*ly both in Body and in Spirit.*~~ The same
 Apostle teacheth saying ; *He that is un-*
~~*married careth for the things that belong*~~
~~*to the Lord, how he may please the Lord,*~~
~~*but he that is Married, careth for the*~~
~~*the things that are of the World, how he*~~
~~*may please his Wife.*~~ So likewise, the Vir-

gin and the Unmarried Woman careth for the things of the Lord, that she may be Holy both in Body and Spirit. A Virgin ought not only to be so, but also to be understood, and believed to be such: to the end that when she is seen nobody may doubt her being a Virgin. Perfection shoud extend it self equally to all: nor shou'd the Ornaments of her Body blast the fame of her Mind. Why shou'd she appear decked or adorn'd, as if she had a Husband, or sought one? If she be a Virgin, let her rather fear to please, than seek to endanger her self, being designed for better and more Heavenly things; Let such as have no Husbands, whom they wou'd feign to please, be pure and perfect not only in body, but in Spirit also: For it is not Lawfull for a Virgin to deck her Features, nor to glory in her flesh, or it's Beauty: whereas all their endeavors shou'd be bent against the Flesh, and their most obstinate strife, in subduing and mortifyeing their Bodys.

St. Paul with a lofty Voice cries
Gal. 6. out, *God forbid that I shou'd
Glory, save in the Cross of*
our

our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the World is Crucified unto me, and I unto the World. And must a Virgin in the Church of Christ, glory in the shape of her Flesh, and Beauty of her Body? St. Paul adds, *Those that are Christs have Crucified their Flesh with their Vices and Lusts.* And must she, who professes to have renounced the Vices and Concupiscences of the flesh, be overtaken in those things to which she has Renounced? when you are found so, O Virgin, its easy to discover what you are; you boast of one thing and you affect another: you taint your self with Spots of carnal Concupiscence, whilst, at the same time you wou'd pass for a Candidate of purity and Modesty. Cry says the Lord to Esaias, *all Flesh is Grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the Flower of the Field: The Grass withereth, and the Flower Fadeth, but the Word of the Lord remaineth for ever.* It becometh no Christian, much less a Virgin, to value her self upon any Honor or Glory of her Flesh, but to thirst after the Word of God, and embrace the things that will endure

endure for ever. Or if she must Glory in the Flesh, then Indeed she may, when she is Tormented for owning her Profession, when she discovers more fortitude, tho' a Woman, than the men who torture her, when she suffers Fire, or the Cross, or the Sword, or the Beasts, that she may be Crowned. these are the most precious Pearls of the Flesh, these the most Glorious ornaments of the Body. But there are some rich Women, who abounding with a plentiful Fortune, love their Riches, and Maintain that it is Lawful to use their goods to their content; first let such know, that she is truly Rich, who is Rich in God: that she has true Wealth, whose Wealth is Christ: that these are the true Goods, which are Spiritual, Divine, Heavenly, which guides us to God, and which we enjoy, with God for ever. Moreover what ever earthly things we possess in this World, and must leave after us, are as much to be contemned as the World it self is Contemptible, whose Poms and Allurments we renounce upon our Happy journey to God.

St

St. John stirs and exhorts us, and with a Heavenly voice conjures us, saying: *Love not the World, neither the things that are in the World,* Joa. 2. *If any man love the World, the Love of the Fathers is not in him. For all that is in the World, the Lust of the Flesh, and the Lust of the Eyes, and the Pride of Life, is not of the Father, but is of the World: and the World passeth away, and the Lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God, abideth for ever, even as God abideth for ever. We must then pursue the things which are Eternal and Divine, and do all things according to the Will of God, we must follow the footsteps of our Lord, and his Divine original, who taught us, saying I did not come down from Heaven to do my own will, but the Will of him that sent me. And if the Servant be not greater than his Master, and the Freeman oweth Obedience to him that made him free; surely, we that desire to be accounted Christians, ought in all reason to immitate that, which Christ has done. It is written, it is read, it*
 is.

is heard, and it is publickly declared in the Church, that, *he that abideth*
 Joa. 2. *in Christ ought himself to walk, even as he hath walked.* We must tread in the same path with him, we must endeavour to follow him with a Holy emulation. Then the pursuit of truth will answer the Faith we profess, and the Reward of Faith is given to him that believes, if he acts according to his belief.

Thou sayst thou art Rich: but St. Paul prevents thee in thy riches, and with a Heavenly voice prescribes, how thou art to Moderate thy Dress. Let Women, says he, *adorn themselves in modest apparel with shamefastness*

1. Tim. *and Sobriety: not with broidered*
 2. *Hair or Gold, or Pearls or Costly Array, but (which becometh Women professing Godliness with good Works. St. Peter likewise is of the same Opinion, saying, whose Adorning, let it*

1. Pet. 3. *not be that outward of pluming the Hair, & of wearing of Gold, or of putting on of Apparel: but let it be the hidden Ornament of the Heart. And if*

if the Apostles do admonish those Women, who, on pretence of their Husbands, do excuse their gaudy Dresses, to restrain and Moderate themselves to a Religious observance of the Ecclesiastical Discipline: how much more ought a Virgin to observe it, who can pretend to no such Allowance; nor fasten the falshood of her fault upon another, since she herself is the only person to whom it can be ascribed. You say, you are Rich, but all that is in your power, is not fit to be done; neither ought those Tedious desires which proceed from Worldly Ambition to extend further, than what is futable to the Honor and Modesty of a Virgin. Since it is written all things are Lawfull unto me, 1. *Cor.* 6. but all things are not expedient. Besides, if you give any Marks of Gallantry in your Dress, and walk remarkably in publick, if you attract and draw the Eyes and Hearts of Young men upon you, if you Cherish the Lust of their desires, if you kindle the Flames of their Hearts, so that you make them perish, tho' you do not perish, and do
kill

kill those you see, as it were with Sword or Poison, you cannot be excused, as if your mind were Chaste and Modest: your immodest Dress and your Strumpet-like Ornaments reproach you: nor can you be reckoned among the Maids and Virgins of Christ, who lives in the World so, as that you may be Lov'd.

You say, you are Rich; but a Virgin ought not to boast of her Riches: since

the Holy Scripture says. *What Sap. 5. did our Pride advantage us, or what did the Vanity of our*

Riches avail us? For all hath passed away like a Shaddow. And again the Apostle exhorteth, saying. And they that buy as tho' they Possessed not; and they that use this World, as not abusing it, for the fashion of this World passeth away. Peter

likewise to whom the Lord gave in charge to feed and keep his flock, upon whom he founded his Church, denies to have Silver or Gold: but affirms that he is Rich in the grace of Christ, and Wealthy in his Faith and power, where-with he might work many and Wonderfull Miracles, and abound in Spiritual

goods

goods for his glories sake, this Wealth, these Riches cannot be possessed by him, who wou'd rather be Rich in this world than in Christ. You say, you are Rich and Wealthy, and think you may use these things which God was willing you shou'd possess: do so, use them, but let it be for things that tends to your Salvation, make use of them to good purposes, use them as the Lord hath shewed and Commanded you. Let the Poor perceive that you are Rich, let the Needy find that you have Wealth, give out your Patrimony to God upon use, feed Christ: that you may bear away the glory of your Virginity, and Happily attain to the reward that attends it, have the Prayers of many. Deposit your Treasure, where no Thief can dig up, where no sly Knave can break in. Acquire Riches, but let it be in Heaven, where your Fruit will be Permanent and Everlasting, secured from the danger of any Secular injury, where Rust cannot Eat it, nor Hail break it, nor the Sun burn it, nor rain spoil it. for you Sin against God, even in this
 very

very thing, if you believe, Riches were given you for any other end, than to work your Salvation. For, tho' God gave Man a Voice, he ought not therefore to sing Lascivious and Immodest Songs therewith; he Created Iron to Till the Earth, yet we must not commit Murder with it: nor must one Sacrifice to Idols, because God produced Incense, Wine, and Fire; neither must you offer Victimes to their Altars, because your Fields abound with flocks of Cattle. Otherwise a large Patrimony is a Temptation, if not turned to good use: as every one aboundeth in Riches, so ought he rather to redeem than increase his sins. Notable Marks in Cloaths and Ornaments, and Lascivious dresses, become none, but Prostitute and Immodest Women, and no habit is more Precious than theirs whose Modesty is least esteem'd. So in the holy Scriptures, where with the Lord wou'd have us be taught and admonished, that whore-like, and proudly decked City, which with its Ornaments, or rather, for its Ornaments, was to perish, is described. *And there.*

there came; says St. John, one of the Seaven Angels which had Apo. 17. the Seven Vials, and talked with me, saying, come hither, I will shew unto thee, the Judgment of the great Whore, that sitteth upon many Waters: with whom the Kings of the Earth have committed Fornication. So he carried me away in the Spirit into the Wilderuess: and I saw a Woman sitting upon a Beast; and the Woman was arrayed in Purple, and Scarlet Colour, and Decked with Gold, and precious Stones, and Pearls, having a Golden Cup in her hand full of Abominations, and filthieffs of her Fornications. Let all Chast and Modest Women shun the Deckings of the Incestuous, let them detest the dress of Strumpets, the Marks of Bawds, and the ornaments of whores. In like manner the Prophet Esaias replenished with the Holy Ghost crys out, and reproaches the Daughters of Sion, which were corrupted by their Gold and Silver, and Aray, and severely Chides those that abounded with Pernicious Wealth. Because, says he, Esa. 3. the Daughters of Sion are
Haughty,

Haughty, and walk with stretched forth Necks, and wanton Eyes, Walking and Mincing as they go, & making a tinkling with their Feet : therefore the Lord will smite with a Scab the Crown of the Head of the Daughters of Sion, and the Lord will discover their secret parts, in that day, the Lord will take away the Bravery of their Tinkling ornaments, and their cauls, and their round Tires like the Moon, the Chains, and the Bracelets, and the Mufflers, the Bonnets, and the ornaments of the Legs, and the Head-bands, and the Tablets and the Ear-rings ; the changeable suits of Apparel and the Mantles, and the Wimples, and the Crysping-pins. And it shall come to pass, that instead of a Sweet smell, there shall be a Stink ; and instead of a Girdle, a Rent, and instead of well set Hair there shall be Baldness. This is what God blames, this is what he remarks : hence it is, that he pronounces Virgins Corrupted, hence it is that he declares that they have degenerated from the true, and divine Ornament. Being Exalted, they fell : being Decked, they deserved Dirt and filthyness ;

ness; when they put on Silks and Purple, they cannot be cloathed with Christ, being decked with Gold, and Pearls, and Precious stones, they loose the Ornaments of their Hearts and Minds. Who wou'd not detest and abhor that which was so fatal to others? Who wou'd covet or desire, that, which was like a sword or Dart to the ruin of others? If you had seen one Drink a Cup, and Die, you wou'd soon guess his drink was Poison; if you had seen one Eat and expire, you wou'd judge that, what he eat was Mortal, that cou'd so soon kill; neither wou'd you eat or drink of that, whereof you had seen others Die. Now what weakness of Understanding, what Blindness, what Madness is it, to covet that, which always has & does offend? What madness is't, to think that you will not Perish by that, wherewith, you are Conscious, so many to have been Killed? For God, did not make sheep of Purple or Scarlet Colour, neither did he teach men to Die and Colour wool with the juice of herbs, or with Violet, nor has he ordained Bracelets beset

beset with Gold, Pearls, and precious stones orderly ranked, that you may hide the Neck which he has made, that what God had formed in man may be covered, and what the Devil had invented may appear. Wou'd God have Wounds to be made in ears, wherewith the Innocent babes that knows no evil, are Tormented, that Precious grains may hang at those Wounded ears, grains heavy, indeed, not with their own, but with the weight of their price? All which the sinfull and Apostate Angels discovered by their arts, when tumbling into Earthly contagion, they fell from their Celestial Vigor. It was they, who taught to Paint the Eye-brows with Black, and to daub the Cheeks with counterfeit red, and to alter the Hair with adulterated Colours, in a word, to besmear all the Face and Head with the filth of their Paint.

And now, indeed, for the fear and care which Faith suggests to us, for the Love and tenderness, which our Brotherhood requires of us, I think that not onely Virgins, or Widdows, but also
Wives,

Wives, and all sort of Women, are to be admonished, that they shou'd by no means suffer their form and shape, which is the work of God, to be Adulterated, either with Yellow colour, or Black dust, or Red, or any other Ointment whatsoever, which defaces the Natural Linements and the handework of the Creator.

God says; *let us make Man after our own Image and likeness*; and will any body be so bold as to alter and change that which he has made? they lay Violent hands upon God, when they presume to reform and disfigure what he has form'd; not understanding that what ever is born is the work of God, but what ever is altered is the work of the Devil. If a Skillful Limner had, drawn a Picture, and with exquisite Colours painted, to the Life, every Feature and Linement in the Body, and that another, pretending more skill, wou'd lay hands upon it, in order to Mend the Work, the former doubtless wou'd think himself injured and wou'd be justly offended:

fended: and do you think, your rash Presumption will escape unpunished, who dares lay hands on a piece drawn by the hands of the Almighty? For tho' you be not Lewd, nor Immodest in the Eyes of Men, for your Prostitute paint; you are nevertheless an adulteress when you Corrupt and Violate the work of God. You think to Adorn, and set your self out, but in the mean time you impugn the Divine work, and falsifie the truth. The words of the Apostle sufficiently instructeth in this: *Purge out*

1. Cor. says He the old Leaven, that ye may be a new Lump, as ye are unleavened; for even Christ our Pasover is Sacrificed for us. Therefore let us keep the Feast, not with old Leaven, neither with the Leaven of Malice and Wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and Truth. Can sincerity and truth persist, when that that is sincere is Polluted with Adulterated Colours, and truth with Sophisticated Ointments is changed into a lye? Your Lord and Master says: you cannot make one hair in your Head White or Black: and you
to

to convince your Masters words, and shew your one skill to be greater, wou'd with a rash and Sacrilegious contempt Colour your Hair; as a future presage of your Evil, you covet to have Golden hair, and you sin (ô wickedness) in your Head, that is to say, in the most precious part of your Body; and as it is written of the Lord: *His Head, and the Hair of his head* Apoc. 2. *was White like Wool or Snow;* you abhor that hoariness, you detest that Whiteness which is like to the Lords head. Are not you affraid, pray, when the day of Judgment comes, that your Maker will not know you, and when you come to the Promised Rewards will turn you away, and shut you out, saying: this is not my work, this Image is not Mine; you have polluted your Skin with false Paste, you have altered your hair with Adulterated Colours, you have taken a false Face for your own, your Figure is corrupted, your Countenance altered, you cannot see God, since you have not the Eyes which were made by God, but
which

which were infected by the Devil. ^{him} you have followed, the Blaseing and Painted eyes of the Serpent you have Immitated, by your enemy you have been dressed, and with him you shall burn. Are not these things, I beseech you, to be considered by the Servants of God? Are not these hourly and daily to be feared? Let Married women have a care how they flatter themselves with a vain pretence of pleasing their Husbands, whom, when they produce for their excuse, they joyn in the Guilt of their Criminal condescension. Indeed Virgins, (whose good this discourse chiefly Consults,) which sets themselves out with such art, are not, in my opinion, to be reckoned among Virgins: but like Mangy Cattle, or Scabby sheep ought to be driven and chas'd from the pure and Holy fold of Virginitie; lest they shou'd infect, or pollute the rest by their Contagion, whilst they live amongst them. And since our purpose is to seek what is good for chaste minds, let us shun whatever is pernicious and destructive to them. Neither can I

pass

pass those things by, which being introduced by a certain negligence, do usurp a kind of Liberty contrary to modest and sober Behaviour. Some Virgins are not asham'd to be present at Weddings, and with the Lascivious discourses Generally practised on such Occasions, to mix immodest words, to hear what is not becomming, to observe what is not lawful to be told, to be present at obscene words and Drunken Feasts wherewith the Flames of Lusts are kindled, and the Bride encouraged to suffer the loss of her Maiden-head, and the Bridegroom prompted to the confidence of taking it.

What place is there for her at Weddings, who has not a mind to Marry? or how can they be pleasant or Merry, where such different and opposite wishes and desires do meet? What is there learnt? what is there seen? how much does a Virgin fail in her purpose who, was modest when she came, but immodest departing? tho' she is chaste in body and mind, yet in her Eyes, in

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her Ears , in her Tongue she is not.

But what of those Virgins, who Promiscuouſly with thoſe of the other ſex go to Baths? who Proſtitute their Bodies, which they had before devoted to Chaſtity and Modeſty, to the Luſt of Lascivious Eyes, who when they ſee and are ſeen naked by Men, do they not Adminiſter a Temptation to wickedneſs? does not ſuch objects, ſollicit and Invite the beholders to corrupt and deſile them? But one will ſay, let every one ſee to what Intention he comes there; for my part, I have no other but to waſh and reſreſh my Body. That plea does not purge you; nor excuſe the crime of your Lascivious wantonneſs. Such a Bath does not waſh but ſully you, nor does it Cleanſe your Members but Deſile them. you look at none Lasciviouſly, but you your ſelf are Lasciviouſly Looked upon: you do not pleaſe your eyes with any foul object, but being the object that pleaſes others,
your

your Self is polluted: you make a shew of the Bath, and the place where you meet is worse than the Theatre. there all modesty is put off together with your cloaths, all modesty and shame-facedness of the Body is laid aside; Virginity it self is discovered even to be seen and handled. Now let me see, can you be modest amongst Men when you are Clothed, you, I say, whose nakedness has encouraged them to attempt your Chastity?

Its for this reason the Church laments her Virgins, thus she Mourns for their Infamous and detestable faults, so the Flower of Virgins fade, the honor and Modesty of Chastity is cut off, all their glory and worth is profaned. Thus the devouring Enemy by his execrable arts insinuates himself: thus the Devil Creeps in insensibly: thus when Virgins go about decked and trim'd, they are no more Virgins; being corrupted with their hidden disgrace, they are Widdows before they are Wives; they are adulteresses, not of Husbands but of

C. 2.

Christ;

Christ; and according to the Measure of the reward which Virgins are to expect, so much shall they suffer pains for the loss of their Virginitie.

Hear me therefore as a Father, o Virgins; hear me, I beseech you, instructing and advising you, hear me for your own good and profit: be ye such as God your Artificer has made you: Be ye such as the Hands of your Heavenly Father has ordained you. Let not the Face be tainted, let the Neck be pure, the Countenance sincere: Let not the Ears be wounded, nor the Neck or Arms tyed up with precious Chains of Pearl or stone. — Let your feet be free from Golden heeters your Hair from Sophisticated Colours. Let your Eyes be worthy to look God in the Face, use Baths among Women whose conversation may render such washings innocent, avoid the wicked Feasts, and Lascivious Banquets of Weddings, whose very Contagion is dangerous. You that is a Virgin, you that glory in serving the Lord shou'd be above

any thoughts of Immodest Apparel,
conquer your Gold, you that triumph
over the Flesh and the World.

'Tis not surely the property of one
and the same, not to be overcome in
great, and yet to succumb

Mat. 7. in mean things. *The way is
straight and narrow which
leads to life*; the path is high and difficult
which tends to glory: by this
small path the Martyrs do pass, Vir-
gins do go, and every one that is just
do walk. Avoid the broad and spaci-
ous way: there are Poisonous plea-
sures, and mortal allurements: there
the Devil flatters, that he may de-
ceive; pleases, that he may hurt; In-
tices, that he may Kill. The fruit
of Martyrs, as the first, is an Hundred
fold; yours, as the Second is Sixty.
And as their thoughts is not of the
World or the Flesh, nor their strife
little, light or delicate: so let your
courage in suffering be next them,
whose reward in glory is ranked in
the Second place.

It is not easy to attain to great things, how do we sweat, how do we labour, when we mount hills, or tops of Mountains? How great then shou'd our labour be, when we ascend to Heaven? if you consider the reward that is promis'd your labour will come far short of it. Immortality is given to him that perseveres; an eternal Life is promised, the Lord promiseth a Kingdom. preserve ô Virgins that which ye began to be. Keep that which ye will be. Great is the reward which attends you, great is the price of Virtue, and very great is the reward of Chastity. Wou'd you know how great are the evils Virtue wants, and the good it possesseth. *I will multiply,* says God to the Woman *thy* 17. Gen. *Sorrow, and thy Conception:* 3. *In sorrow thou shalt bring forth Children: and this desire shall be to thy Husband, and he shall rule over thee.* Ye are free from that decree, Ye do not fear the sorrow or groans of Women Travelling in Child-birth: Ye

Ye are in no danger of that Nature, neither is a Husband your Master, but Christ your Lord and Chief is instead of a Husband, whose Lot and Fortune is common to you.

This is the voice of the Lord saying : *The Children of this world Marry, and are given in Marriage, but they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that World and the Resurrection from the Dead, neither Marry, nor are given in Marriage. neither can they die any more for they are equal unto the Angels, and are the Children of God, being the Children of the Resurrection.* What we will, that ye now begin to be. Ye do already enjoy the glory of the Resurrection. Ye pass through the World without the Worlds infection. Whilst ye persevere in Chastity, ye are equal to the Angels of God ; provided your Chastity be pure and unspotted ; and that as it begun stoutly, so it may last continually, and affect no Ornaments of Jewels or Pearls but of good manners. Look up on God and Heaven,
and

and do not abase those Eyes lifted up to the Consideration of Carnal concupiscence or Earthly things.

The first decree Commands to encrease and Multiply: the Second advises Continencc. When the World was in the beginning empty and unpeopled, it was necessary to Propagate and multiply Mankind that the earth might be inhabited: but now since the World is replenished, such as have the gift of continence, make themselves Eunuchs for the Kingdom of Heaven. This the Lord commandeth not, but exhorteth. Nor doth he impose a necessity upon us, since he left us a free will to use it. But seeing there are a great many Mansions with the Father, he wou'd shew us which of them are the best: Ye thirst after these best Mansions, and if you mortifie the desires of the Flesh, you will get the reward of a greater grace in Heaven. Indeed as many as attained to that divine Benefit of sacred Baptism, have by the grace of thar Sacrament put off the old man, and being renewed by the

the Holy Ghost, are cleansed from the Filth of the old contagion by a new Regeneration. But ye, who have cast off the desires of Flesh and Blood, have a greater title to the Sanctity and purity of that Regeneration, whilst ye keep the things only that are of Virtue and of the Spirit. It's the voice of the Apostle, whom the Lord calls his chosen Vessel, and whom he sent to promulgate his Heavenly commands: *The first man is of the Earth, Earthy: the second is the Lord from Heaven: as is the Earthy, such are they also that are Earthy: and as is the Heavenly, such are they also that are Heavenly. and as we have borne the image of the Earthy, we shall also bear the Image of the Heavenly.* This Image Virginitie bears, so doth integrity, so doth Truth and Holyness. Such as are mindful of the Discipline of the Lord, such as joyn Religion with Justice; such as are steadfast in Faith, humble in fear, strong in Sufferings, mild in bearing injuries, prompt in doing works of Mercy, unanimous in peace
and

and concord do bear this Image. All which ô good Virgins, ye ought to observe, Love and fullfil ; ye who having leasure to serve God and Christ do with a greater and more excellent part go before to the Lord to whom ye are Consecrated. Ye that are Elder instruct the Younger, ye that are Younger assist the Elder, excite your equals, stir up one another with mutual Exhortations, provoke to Glory with documents of Emulation in Virtue. Endure stoutly, go on Spiritually, arrive Hapily. And remember me, when your Virginitie begins to be Crowned.

FINIS.

